



Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilot

Buffalo, NY

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA Region 2 selected the City of Buffalo for a Regional Brownfields Pilot. Economic decline and contaminated industrial sites have negatively impacted the quality of life for residents. The City of 328,000 residents bears a disproportionate number of contaminated sites — over 60 in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System (CERCLIS), as well as over 20 on the New York State Registry of Inactive Hazardous Waste Sites. Fear regarding possible contamination is attached to countless other properties in the City.

OBJECTIVES

The Buffalo Brownfields Pilot is a cooperative effort working to promote the safe, productive, and appropriate reuse of the City's brownfields. This effort will contribute to ensuring a safer, cleaner environment, as well as creating and promoting new, clean, high quality residential, commercial, and industrial acreage. EPA funds will help to develop a City-wide master list of potential brownfields sites, create a database of information, and develop a process for prioritizing sites for further assessment and analysis.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Buffalo, New York

Date of Award:
September 1995

Amount: \$200,000

Site Profile: The Pilot targets public and private properties that have near term development potential and are located in areas needing revitalization.

Contacts:

Jim Smith
Office for the
Environment
City of Buffalo
(716) 851-5608

Larry D'Andrea
U.S. EPA - Region 2
(212) 637-4314
dandrea.larry@
epamail.epa.gov

Visit the EPA Brownfields Website at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

The Pilot is guided by the Buffalo Brownfields Task Force, comprised of County and City Department officials; regional State regulatory agency officials; a member of the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice; representatives from the City's official Buffalo Environmental Management Commission; members of the banking, legal, real estate, business, and university communities; and the general public.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Initiated development of a geographic information system (GIS) database. The GIS database will allow for input and manipulation of planning, environmental, and economic site data, and will serve as a key information resource for anyone interested in any property in Buffalo;
- Prepared a detailed inventory of 22 potential brownfields sites;
- Completed six environmental site assessments; and
- Prepared a Community Outreach Plan, which is expected to be released in mid-1997. The plan will serve as the mechanism for informing the public of the City's brownfields community participation process.

The Pilot is:

- Preparing a Brownfields Redevelopment Manual to be available to the City, business, and environmental communities and serve as a tool for future development efforts;
- Coordinating a brownfields workshop/developer showcase to be held in 1997;
- Improving the affected public's ability to understand, evaluate, and fully participate in the decision-making process;

- Finalizing a development strategy for roughly 1,000-1,500 former industrial acres in southern Buffalo. The Pilot will prioritize sites for brownfields assessment. In addition, based on the results of a Phase I environmental site assessment, project developers are beginning development of a conceptual plan for a property in this area; and
- Finalizing a development strategy for overall brownfields redevelopment projects based on community vision, economic development possibilities, and health and environmental concerns.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Buffalo Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- Assisted the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of the LTV Republic Steel Site. A 25-acre hydroponic tomato greenhouse will now occupy the former industrial site on the banks of the Buffalo River. Petroleum waste from the LTV Republic Steel site may be recycled to make asphalt and reduce runoff into the river.
- Assisted the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of the Atlas Steel site. A 16-screen cinema with a total expected seat-capacity of 3,500, will join a restaurant, delicatessen, and discount department store as new occupants of the former steel plant site.